



# Foggy Bottom News

Published for and by the Citizens of Foggy Bottom

June 1980

Volume 24, No. 9

## FBA MEETING

Monday

June 30

8 p.m.

St. Paul's Parish House

2430 K St., N.W.

## FBA Holds D.C. Council "Candidates Night"

By Robert Charles and John Landgraf

Politics, politics, POLITICS! Calendar year 1980 certainly falls into that quadrennial category. While the Presidential primaries clearly over-shadowed and captured nation-wide media attention, we, in D.C. examined our individual consciences and collectively cast our ballots at the polls on Tuesday, May the 6th. At that election we exercised our franchise and essential right to vote for our preference for President, for our lone Delegate to Congress, and for Party activists to serve on the respective Statehood, Republican and Democratic City-wide political Committees.

Most of us, by now, are probably pretty weary of the whole business of politics — being mindful, of course, that we must still do our duty in November. After all, May is well behind us and November is so far away that one thinks of leaden-grey skies filled with snow. Yet we will be reminded of politics throughout the summer in that the Democrats and the Republicans will each hold their national nominating Conventions. And we, as citizens, cannot escape media coverage of this process as it unfolds.

BUT, there are still primaries to be held in Washington, D.C. this September for our City Council which have direct — not derivative — and practical — not philosophical — bearing on every resident and registered voter living in Foggy Bottom. At this very moment, and within our part of the City (Ward II), nominating petitions are being circulated to either re-elect or unseat JOHN A. WILSON (D-WII), the same for or against JOHN RAY (D-At

Large), and ditto for Rev. JERY MOORE (R-At Large).

Even though the Foggy Bottom Association is not (nor has it ever been) a political club, there remains of any and every neighborhood group the fundamental responsibility to report to its membership, and to the immediate community, events and activities that affect it. To that end, on the same evening that our Association will hold its own election for 1980-81 Officers and Executive Board members, it is appropriate that our organization hear from candidates who will carry our interests downtown.

The reason that this City Council "forum" is held so well in advance of the September primaries is that the FBA does not meet over the summer and our September meeting convenes three weeks after the precinct polls shut down. Thus, we have a unique opportunity to calmly evaluate candidates over sufficient time prior to election-week prostration, and our June meeting affords us the only chance to meet with these individuals before they are selected by the Electorate.

The importance attached to our concern for the City Council is simply this:

Council Members (specifically Ward II, and by extension At-Large) deal with the consistently-shifting variety of problems which arise in our rapidly-changing urban environment. These prospective Council (Please see "Candidates" Page 8)

## Ballantine Offers Insights on Black/White Relations

by Pamela Mack

Because Charles Poffenbarger, originally scheduled to speak at the FBA May 27th meeting, was sent by the *Post* out of town for the week, he provided a replacement in the person of Paul W. Ballantine, general assignment reporter on the city desk of the *Post*. Mr. Ballantine gave a stimulating talk covering his fifteen years of experience, covering the views of Washington's black population toward the whites, and the city government. He began by mentioning that not even the weather has been immune from racial overtones in the confrontation. For example, black leaders joked about the torrential rains which engulfed Resurrection City during its brief life here in 1968 near the Lincoln Memorial as a conspiracy among white power brokers to seed the clouds. The few snow days in Washington in contrast to those in the suburbs are complained about, although they are actually limited because of the large number here of poor black single parent households, where there would be no one home if children were frequently released from their schools.

According to Mr. Ballantine, a kind of paranoia governs black political reaction to Federal institutions, including the Congress and Executive branch. Black politicians have tended to see the District's problems as long-term oppression of their kind. Although the city is now governed by a popularly elected Mayor and City Council, it differs, he said, from others cities where civic leaders of wealthy families are members of this standing networks with deep historic roots. In Washington there has, as yet, been no time for these connections to form, although Mr. Ballantine expects them in the coming years. Washington's new black civic leaders, came from religious, civil rights, or public service backgrounds.

The whites in Washington are predominately wealthy, landed, and well plugged-in to the mercantile systems, but they don't now have strong ties to City Hall. As Mr. Ballantine pointed out, the connections between the two forces will come in time and some changes are already evident in the current make-up of the City Council, which now has seven females, three whites and more lawyers and professionals than the earlier Council.

Mr. Ballantine emphasized that blacks look at whites from single viewpoint or perspective. Instead, a wide range attitudes exists, and Mr. Ballantine used extreme points of view to illustrate. As one case he described what he called a

Walter Washington Model. This viewpoint represents the conservative philosophy that the District of Columbia cannot be viable without integration with the suburbs and with a return of whites to the city — whites with money to invest in the city to enlarge the tax base so that a wider range of services can be supported there. Recent demographic changes seem to support this view, for the white population in the city has increased by about 12,000 to 15,000 since 1975, so that the percentages of whites now stands at about twenty-five. This change is partly due to the efforts of the white Board of Trade to lure whites back into town from the suburbs with office and condominium developments. Furthermore, a significant outward migration of blacks has taken place at the same time, particularly an outmigration of poor blacks on welfare.

The Julius Hobson model according to Mr. Ballantine, is an opposite, extreme case-isolationist, nationalistic, and ideological in a black sense. It is also a cynical view according to Mr. Ballantine. He explained that Julius Hobson, a former City Council member, leaned toward a Marxist point of view and became increasingly isolationist in his later years. He saw the District of Columbia as a potential black city and power base, to which end he founded the D.C. Statehood Party. He was suspicious of the long-range effects of the Metro systems and of the Council of Governments, which would act as a dilutant to a black Washington. To this day, Mr. Ballantine said, some blacks think that attempts at regionalism, and even the fair housing laws in the region, are a conscious white plot to dilute the black power base. These laws are perceived by some as an effort to disperse blacks into white areas and thus effectively reduce their cohesiveness.

### FBA Business

Chairman Landgraf reported on recent activities of the FBA Executive Board.

*Red Lion Row:* George Washington University has been exceedingly cooperative on this developing project. At a May 13 meeting with community groups it was reported that the university had been unable to obtain all the property needed and as a result the plans will have to be changed. The revised design, including a (Please see "FBA" Page 6)

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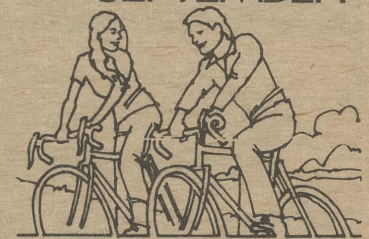
Mosher reviews National Lyric Opera's *Aida*. Page 7

WTOP and Renwick display art of Tim Evans. Page 2

Local corporation recycles newspapers. Page 6

GW outlines plans for 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue. Pages 4-5

## SEPTEMBER



Your volunteers need a vacation too!

So, the *Foggy Bottom News* will not be publishing in July and August. Have a good summer.

We'll see you in September.



## FBA Member Honored

Mary Healy has been honored by the City Council. The text of the resolution follows:

Whereas, Mary Healy, a resident of Foggy Bottom, is a second-generation Washingtonian and was raised in and attended Amidon School and Jefferson Junior High School in pre-urban Renewal Southwest:

Whereas, Mary Healy has for most of her adult life exemplified and continues to exemplify, all of the positive characteristics, such as commitment, advocacy and "know-how", associated with an all-around, successful community activist;

Whereas, Mary Healy's commitment to and advocacy for the people of her Foggy Bottom neighborhood have been amply demonstrated, by her work with the development and planning for St. Mary's Court, a model residence for Senior Citizens; her successful efforts to restore the 80/81 bus service; and her leadership role in getting this Council to extend property tax relief to housing cooperatives, among many others;

Whereas, Mary Healy's commitment to and advocacy on

behalf of the physical environment in her Foggy Bottom neighborhood can be readily seen in the many beautifully laid out and maintained parks and green spaces, in improved traffic patterns and signals, and in the just-completed Eye Street Mall; and

Whereas, Mary Healy's well-known and widely-read "Seen Around the Bottom" column in the *Foggy Bottom News* (a monthly publication of the Foggy Bottom Association) was for many years a well honored tool in developing avenues of communication, cooperation, and action among all segments of the community — residents, businesses, and institutions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this resolution may be cited as the "Resolution to Honor Mary Healy."

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia wishes to acknowledge Mary Healy's dedication and commitment to her community and to express their appreciation for her many accomplishments.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

## GW Signs Agreement For Pennsylvania Avenue Complex

The George Washington University and Public School Employees' Retirement System of Pennsylvania have signed an agreement for joint development of an office/retail/historical buildings restoration complex. The project, which will have an address of 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., includes the northern half of the block fronting on Eye Street between 20th and 21st Streets, N.W. It will replace what is now known as Red Lion Row and is scheduled for completion in 1983.

GW evaluated 21 proposals before selecting the Public School Employees' Retirement System of Pennsylvania as a participant. The venture was negotiated by Walker & Dunlop working through the retirement fund's adviser, the Fidelity Bank, Philadelphia.

The complex will provide approximately 400,000 square feet of new office/retail space, 28,000 square feet in the restored buildings, and two levels of below-ground parking. The project will proceed from preliminary concepts to final design under direction of the venture.

## Foggy Bottom's Dollmaker on TV and at the Renwick

by Ellie Becker

Foggy Bottom's Tim Evans was the subject of a segment of WTOP-TV's "PM Magazine" this month, and during the month of June a collection of his creations will be on exhibit at the Renwick Gallery.

Tim, who lives in the 2500 block of Eye Street, is a commercial artist by vocation, and a maker of exquisite dolls by avocation. During the television interview, he said he absorbed the art from his grandmother, but kept his skill with a sewing machine quiet until 1975 when he submitted a doll to the Renwick. That doll, "Miss Haversham" (named for a Dickens character), was accepted for a Smithsonian Bicentennial Exhibition, and Tim Evans, dollmaker,

was out in the open — and subsequently much in demand.

It was a treat to be sitting in front of the television set and see Tim walking down Eye Street and into his home. Inside, the eye of the camera took us up the staircase occupied by imaginative "little people," then into Tim's workroom. There were views of Tim at the sewing machine, marking cloth from patterns, and best of all, of his dolls.

Tim's dolls are soft, mostly white, varying in size, and many are distinguished, adorned by intricate stitching, antique lace and other fabrics. The gallery handling the sale of the dolls reports a continuing demand for his work. Anyone who has seen them easily understands why!

## Tenants Celebrate Purchase of President

by Kathy Haley

May 28th was a night of celebration for the members of the President Apartment Tenants Association. Following their annual meeting, PATA members and friends broke out champagne and sandwiches to celebrate the purchase of their building the previous Friday.

Outgoing PATA president, Bill Buchanan, Vice-President, Dorothy Bodeen, Secretary, Linda Erskian and Treasurer, Margie Risinger were toasted for many hours of hard work and dedication. Joining the festivities were Ann Garfinkle, one of several lawyers advising PATA and Steve Levy,

Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner.

Representatives of the Edmund J. Flynn Company, which is marketing the future condominium units, were also on hand. And Jim Draude, who earlier that night had been elected to replace Bill Buchanan as president of PATA, joined the celebration.

Members of PATA have been working to purchase their building since last December, when building owner Lester Rosenberg informed tenants at the President that he had contracted to sell the building to George Washington University.

## STA's Been Busy

by Ellie Becker

Early this month, DESPINA S. KANELES was sworn in as a public member of the District's Rental Accommodations Board. Despina served as president of the Swarthmore Tenants Association, and brings the experiences of a renter and, more recently, a condo owner to her new position. Best of luck, Despina, from everyone in Foggy Bottom. It's great to have our community represented on this D. C. agency.

Also from the Swarthmore — May 28 was a big day for that building. That was the date of the closing which turned the ownership of the apartment over to the Swarthmore Tenants Limited Partnership. It was the culmination of many months of hard work. Congratulations, STA!

Ellie Becker

## Letters

Editor:

On June 3, I attended a D.C. Council meeting at which Ms. Mary Healey was honored by the entire Council with a citation for her dedication and civic commitment to the Foggy Bottom Community.

I thought this item of news would be of interest to you and readers of the *Foggy Bottom News*, because in the citation, Ms. Healey was commended for her "Seen Around the Bottom" column, as "... a well-honed tool in developing avenues of communication, cooperation, and action among all segments of the community..."

Sincerely yours,  
Jaqueline Cooper

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The Foggy Bottom News is a publication of the Foggy Bottom Association. All editorial and other assistance is contributed on a volunteer basis by residents of the area.

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers. Their appearance here constitutes neither an endorsement nor official policy of the Foggy Bottom Association.

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Secretary ..... June Haley  
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## Berlin Ballet To Perform At Kennedy Center

The Berlin Ballet, which first appeared in the United States in the summer of 1978, will have its Washington debut at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, for 15 performances, beginning July 30th. Their appearances at the Kennedy Center Opera House follow an engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House. Rudolf Nureyev, Galina Panov, Valery Panov and Evelyne Desutter will be guest artists with the company of 75 dancers, under the directorship of Gert Reinholm. Principal dancers are Dianne Bell, Klaus Beelitz, Eva Evdokimova, Vladimir Gelvan, Heidrun Schwaarz, and Reda Sheta.

Highlighting the Washington engagement will be Valery Panov's *The Idiot*, based on the Dostoevsky novel with music by Shostakovich; John Cranko's *The Firebird*, set to the Stravinsky score; *Five Tangos* by Hans van Manen to the music of Astor Piazzolla; and Rudolf Nureyev's staging of *The Nutcracker* with music by Tchaikovsky.

Valery Panov's *The Idiot*, which premiered in Berlin in June 1979, will have its Washington premiere opening night, July 30th. It is choreographed to a collage of works by Dmitri Shostakovich personally chosen by Mr. Panov, and has costumes by Bernd Muller. There will be six performances and the cast will include Rudolf Nureyev, Valery Panov, Galina Panova and Eva Evdokimova.

John Cranko's *The Firebird*, a one-act work to the Stravinsky score, was originally produced jointly by the Stuttgart and Berlin Companies. First performed in Stuttgart in 1964 and subsequently by the Berlin Ballet, it has costumes and lighting by Jurgen Rose. *Firebird*, along with Hans van Manen's *Five Tangos*, with decor by Jean-Paul Vroom, and Birgit Cullberg's *Miss Julie* appear on a mixed bill, which has four performances, the first of which is on August 1st. Eva Evdokimova will have the *Firebird* role and Galina Panova that of Miss Julie.

Rudolf Nureyev's staging of *The Nutcracker*, with sets and costumes by Nicholas Georgiadis, will play five performances, the first on August 5th. Mr. Nureyev will be seen in the role of Drosselmeyer-Prince and Evelyne Desutter as Clara.

## Dupont Ecology Corporation

The Dupont Circle Neighborhood Ecology Corporation is a non-profit community-based organization which operates a recycling center now located across from the George Washington University Health Clinic on 25th Street between M and N. The center, a large blue dumpster, accepts bundled newspapers and aluminum from the Dupont Circle and Foggy Bottom communities every Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

DCNEC is working to propagate the virtues of a community-based recycling program. A few of these virtues are: recycling reduces solid waste at the neighborhood level, conserves valuable resources, provides a

source of revenue to the community for reinvestment in other neighborhood development projects, and is a source for neighborhood stability and rejuvenation.

Members of the organization meet on the third Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1717 18th Street, N.W.

Jeryl Spector, Secretary-Treasurer of DCNEC, notes that new members and new ideas for the center are always needed. One problem facing the organization now is the need for a new location for its collection center. Anyone interested in working at the center, helping to find a new location, or developing community awareness should call Bill Porter at 234-3153.

## Paralegal Training For Senior Citizens

George Washington University's Paralegal Training for Seniors program is now registering for the fall session beginning in September. People 55 years or older who want to learn how to help other senior citizens with legal problems may be eligible for this nine-month program designed especially for older persons. Courses focus on such topics as Social Security, Medicare, age discrimination, divorce and child custody rights of grandparents. For registration information call 676-4869.

## Classified Advertising

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## His Specialty Is Light

The National Academy of Sciences will present an exhibition of works by Chicago artist John David Mooney from June 1 through August, 1980. The drawings, lithographs, hand-made paper laminates, and photographic documentation relate to Mooney's quarter-mile long environmental light sculpture, "Zagreb Light Lines," installed in Yugoslavia in the fall of 1979.

The exhibition is an official event of the International Sculpture Conference convening in Washington, D.C. the first week in June.

Mooney is best known for his large-scale light sculptures, which include an urban street piece done for the reopening of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in the spring of 1979; the "Indianapolis Mile," extending one mile over land and water at the Indianapolis Museum of Art; and "Light Space 77," an eight-mile long searchlight piece which was shown for seven nights along Chicago's lakefront.

Mooney's research in the field of light sculpture evolved out of his concern with the fugitive nature of color, and initially resulted in plasma light sculptures created for interior spaces. Recent commissions include those for monumental permanent outdoor light sculptures in addition to large-scale process pieces, which encourage the public's involvement in the creative process. His work is included in numerous public collections including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and The Art Institute of Chicago. Mooney has exhibited widely in both the United States and Europe, and has been the recipient of grants and awards from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

He has taught at the University of Illinois and Notre Dame, and has been Artist-in-Residence at Purdue University. He has also been guest artist at numerous universities here and abroad.

The exhibit is a presentation of the Arts-in-the-Academy Program and is open to the public free of charge from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at the National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

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# GW Presents Model, A 2000 Pennsylvania

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A team of architects and staff of the George Washington University vice president and treasurer's office detailed plans for the 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue project before Foggy Bottom-West End Citizens on Tuesday, June 17. The project includes the northern half of a block fronting on Eye Street NW between 20th and 21st streets. It is scheduled for completion in 1983.

The presentation before advisory Neighborhood Commission 2-A, Foggy Bottom Association and West End Citizens Association members included slides and schematics of each building level. It was the first time a model of the complex was available for comment by citizen groups.

Cost of the development is approximately \$40 million. The 400,000-square-foot site includes approximately 33,000 square feet of retail services. From five to eight eating establishments will take up about 15,500 square feet of the commercial area; the remainder is to be rented to other types of retail enterprises.

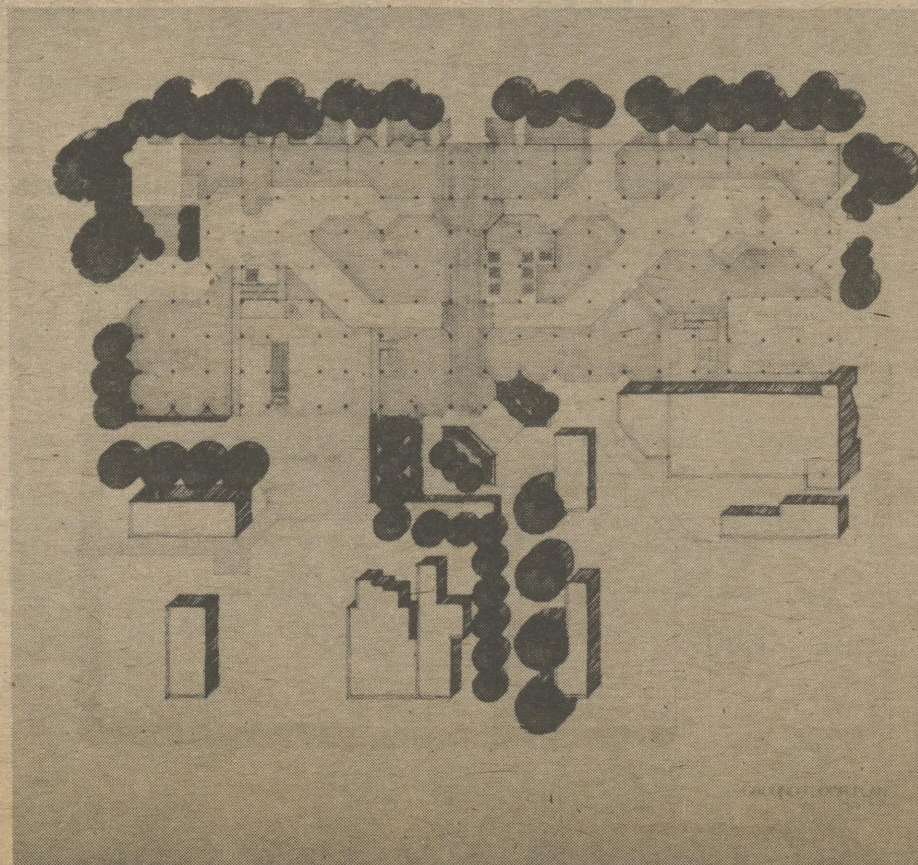
GW evaluated 21 proposals before signing an agreement for joint development of the complex with the Public School Employees' Retirement System of Pennsylvania. The venture, finalized in June, was negotiated by Walker & Dunlop working through the retirement fund's adviser, the Fidelity Bank, Philadelphia.

During the next few months the university will take the project before the D.C. Zoning Commission, the Joint Committee on Landmarks, the National Capital Planning Commission, and other city agencies. The complex will be a planned unit development (PUD), which permits the university some design flexibility in return for providing certain public benefits and amenities in the project.

The design as outlined at the June 17th meeting will require an alley closing and realignment, but will not restrict access to non-university owned properties on the block.

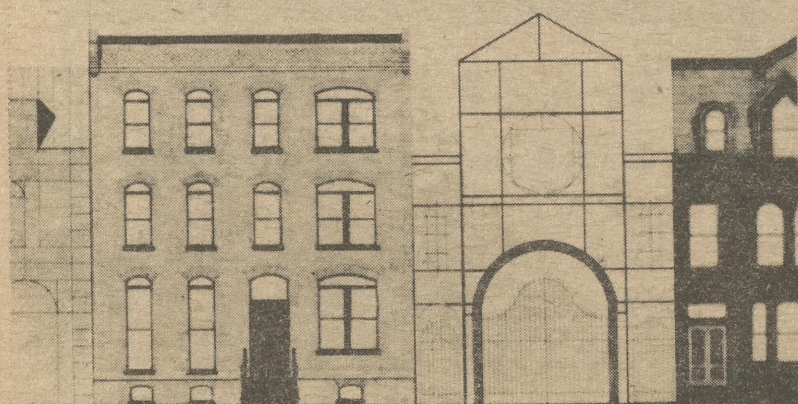
Details presented for the first time at the citizens' meeting included:

- three pedestrian entrances to the complex, on Eye Street, on 21st Street, and on 20th Street, and an interior "loop" of mezzanine walkways circulating among the interior retail space.

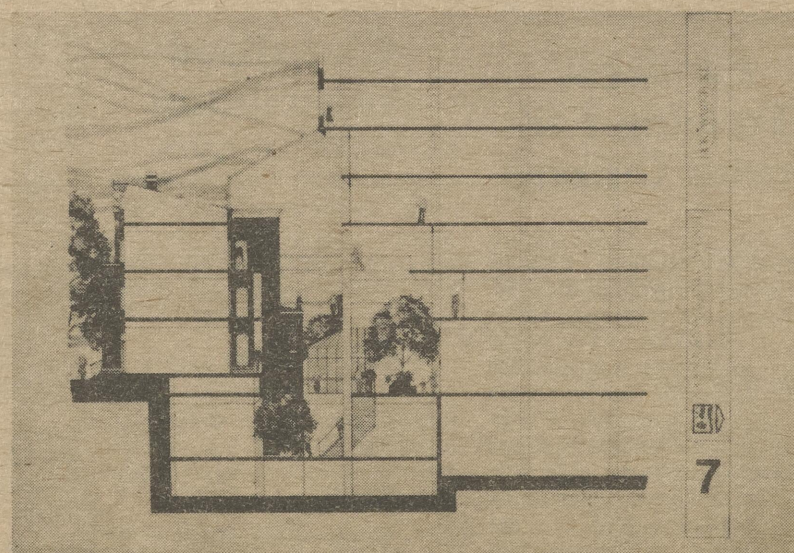


Ground floor plan of development.

- two underground parking levels.
- 6,000 square feet of retail space at one level below grade (of the total of 33,000 square feet of commercial retail) reached by a staircase around a bay at the rear of one of the restored rowhouses.
- accommodations for bicycle and motorcycle parking
- a landscaped walkway on university-owned land from the



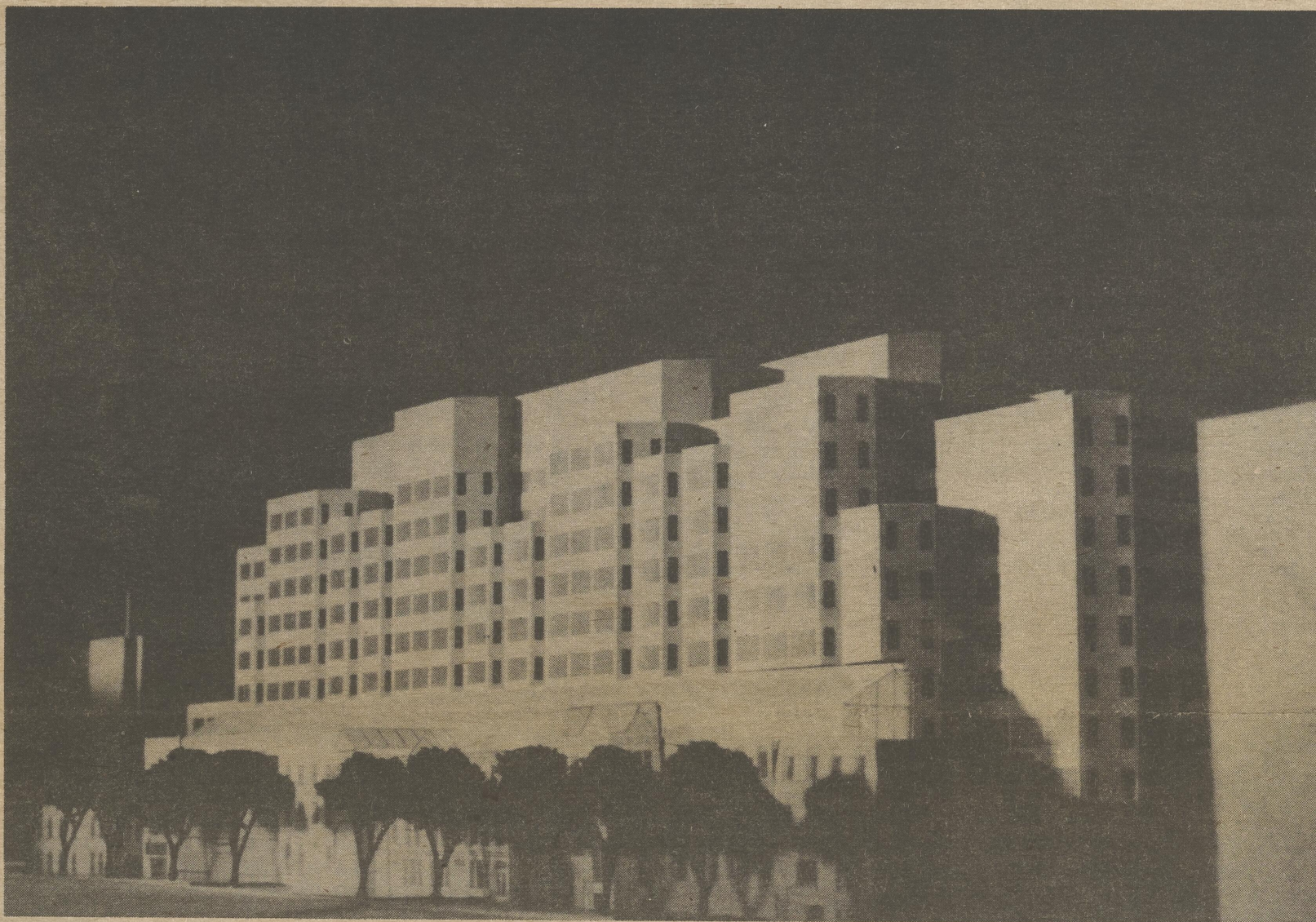
University gate will be built into row of restored facades of existing buildings.



Cross section of building with facades at left, glass enclosed galleria connecting facades to larger building.



# Additional Plans For ia Avenue Project



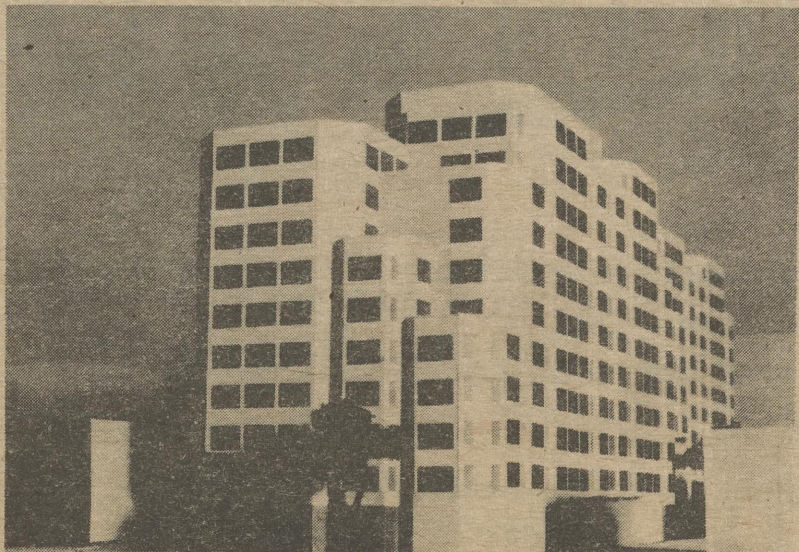
View of complex from 21st & Eye Streets.

rear of the office building south to H Street, connecting the complex to the university yard.

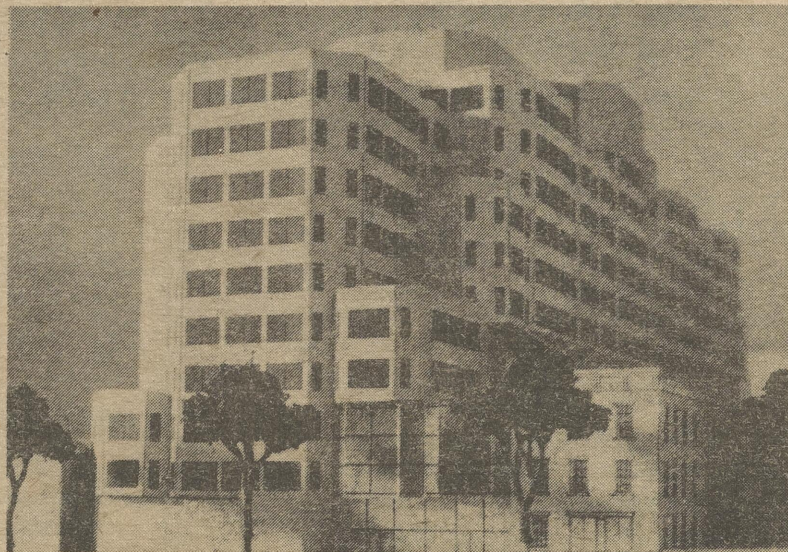
—three structural fill-ins in Red Lion Row gaps: an entrance to the office building lobby; the university gate, a separate entrance for university and community pedestrian traffic providing access through the development to H Street; and a fill-in of vacant space near the 21st Street side of the project.

—terraces at upper levels of the office building for plants.  
—use of the restored Red Lion Row buildings for retail business at the ground levels.

—use of a buff-colored brick as the construction material.  
The development is the design of Hellmuth Obata Kassabaum/Warnecke Associated Architects.



Model of development viewed from H. Street. Building is "wraparound" and will have windows on all sides.



Model of development, viewed from 20th & Eye Streets



## "FBA"

(Continued from Page 1)

model, will be shown to the community at a public meeting at St. Paul's Church house, sponsored by FBA and the ANC, at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 17.

**LaFayette Centre:** The Executive Board has sent letters urging emergency action on an alley closing behind M Street, which has been delayed unreasonably by CBA, which has a building there. The ANC has taken similar action.

**Hotel Conversion:** John Howick reported that the Zoning Commission had made a decision on this issue, one not strict enough from our community viewpoint. Councilmember John Wilson has introduced legislation calling for a 90-day moratorium on such conversions, and permanent legislation is likely to be included in new rent control legislation.

**Nominating Committee for 1980-81 FBA Officers:** Dircks Holscher, Chairman, reported that the Committee had met twice and the following people have been chosen:

President:  
John Landgraf  
Vice President:  
Maureen Holscher  
Treasurer:  
Melvin Ogden  
Secretary:  
No candidate  
Executive Board:

Vote for seven of the names below:  
Eleanor Becker, Martha Berulis, Robert Charles, Maggie Cox, Lucille Duprat, Karen Gordon, June Haley, Anne Lomas, Pamela Mack, Virginia Mulroy, Robert Niemiec, Dorothy Oligar.

The Chairman then asked for further nominations from the floor and none were forthcoming.

**Street Lighting:** Landgraf reported that a letter had been sent to the Street Lighting Section of the D.C. Department of Transportation reporting that 62 percent of the replies received (27 in all) had been in favor of the new higher intensity bulbs installed in a test block and the FBA recommended using them throughout the area.

**Editorial Committee:** After meetings of the current Editorial Committee under Chairwoman Haley and passage by the Executive Board, the following Amendment to the FBA By-Laws has been proposed and is hereby published for the membership:

**Under Article VI-Committees:**  
A new Section 2, to read as follows:

*There shall be a standing Editorial Committee consisting of the Editor of the Foggy Bottom News (FBN), the President of the Association, and five other persons appointed by the President, who shall also designate the chair of the Committee.*

*The primary purpose of the Editorial Committee shall be to provide guidance and advice to the FBN Editor in matters of policy, and further to help conciliate any differences of opinion over content which, from time to time, may exists between the Editor and contributors. The decision of the Editorial Committee may be appealed to the Executive Board. (renumber old Section 2 as Section 3).*

Again, under the Editorial Committee, a policy has been

written and accepted by the Executive Board on publishing restaurant evaluations in the Foggy Bottom News. It read as follows:

*1. Evaluations of restaurants in the Foggy Bottom Area will be published by the Foggy Bottom News at the discretion of the Editor. The date the evaluation was made must appear on all copy submitted for publication. Restaurant reviews should be done on a voluntary basis. Restauranters requesting reviews must be informed that all evaluations will be made without advance notice to the restaurant of the date the review will take place of the name of the individual conducting the review.*

*3. No complimentary meals or drinks are to be accepted by reviewers before the time of the evaluations of a restaurant.*

*4. If a long-time advertiser is reviewed most unfavorably, the Editor should consult the Editorial Committee, which will then decide the course of action.*

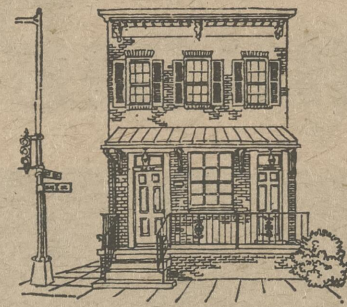
**Advertising Manager:** Long time FBN Advertising Manager Melvin Ogden has resigned from this position and the FBA is searching for a replacement. Prospective candidates should call John Landgraf, 333-2690.

**News Volunteers:** Through a much-regretted oversight, Betty Brown was omitted from the list of distributors which appeared in a recent issue of the FBN. Inez Pulver has extended her route to cover Mrs. Brown's resignation.

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# An Evening at the Opera

by Maureen Mosher

I, like many people, have never developed a love of opera. Don't get me wrong. I'm not the sort who daily exercises my right arm lifting the beer can to my lips as Mork and Mindy romp from escapade to escapade. An evening with the Royal Ballet or with Rostropovich conducting a Beethoven Symphony suits me just fine. But opera . . . about once a year is enough for me.

The why of my dislike for opera has puzzled me; and I never came up with any answers until I went to see the National Lyric Opera Company's presentation of Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*. A friend of mine was singing in the chorus and had invited me to attend.

Each year, the Lyric Opera Company performs an opera. Most of the cast are, like my friend, people who like to sing, enjoy opera, and would like the experience of singing in an opera. For the leading roles, professional opera singers were hired, and both the costumes and the set were rented. The orchestra was composed of the D.C. Federation of Musicians conducted by Lyn McLain. The general manager and artistic director was Nikita Wells, a physicist by profession, who also played the role of Aida's father in the performance.

This motley group put this opera together in 3 months and rehearsed together as a whole unit a total of three times. Given that *Aida* is musically one of the most complex and difficult operas to perform, I looked forward to an "interesting" evening.

When the opening night of May 8 arrived, I was in my seat promptly at 7:30 and waited 20 minutes before his Excellency, Dr. Ashrof A. Ghorbal, ambassador of Egypt, emerged and spoke at length about bringing the cultures of the U.S. and Egypt together.

By this time, I had thoroughly read and memorized the plot of *Aida* as outlined in my program. Like many operas I've seen, the plot consisted of boy loves girl, jealous party separates girl and boy, girl and boy die or commit suicide together, united happily in the ever after.

As the curtain rose, my eye was charmed by the beautiful set and costumes as I strained to spot my friend in the background. As the singers burst into their arias, I noticed that the music didn't quite match with the singing. The strings played some stray sour notes and the tempi of the orchestra lagged behind the singers. This condition persisted in most of the songs throughout the evening. These imperfections were never enough to ruin the continuity of the performance, but they introduced a noticeable (and welcome) human fallibility, which lent a light comic touch to an opera which could be taken too seriously.

*Aida* is grand opera, which means it is long (4 acts with 2 scenes per act), deals with a tragic human story (boy losses girl, boy and girl die together), and is musically complex (many of the choral arias consist of 10 or more melody lines). Such operas are made to be taken seriously and reenact the attitudes and ideas of their time — that is, 18th and 19th century Europe. Those centuries of European culture have always impressed me as a time of rigid class structures, rigid standards of conduct, and patronization and enjoyment of art by the wealthy minority. Opera, like the society which created it, is a rigid, highly structured art form designed mainly to display the singing prowess of the performers, an olympic event for singers of sorts.

What this all adds up to, I deduced, is that opera tends to be somewhat pretentious, artificial, and aristocratic. The sour notes, erratic rhythm, and less than perfect voices of the singers in this performance broke that aura of calculated seriousness and grandeur. I could sit back and enjoy the visual beauty of the costumes and set, the loveliness of the lilting melodies, and winsome expressions of the struggling singers.

Some of the most memorable grand faux pas of *Aida* were the end of the first act as the curtain dropped prematurely on the singing chorus, knocking over one of the singers and eliciting a scatological exclamation from the tenor; the parade of captured Ethiopian slaves in Act II consisting of 8 people who paraded on and off the stage 6 times attempting to give the impression of multitudes, Nikita Wells' entrance in Act II as Aida's father singing and rhythmically tapping his toes against the soles of his sandals; and the entrance of a live camel in Act III, which drooled and spit on the floor until led away, leaving the scent of camel wafting in the air for 15 minutes.

All in all, it was an enjoyable, although long (4 1/2 hours) evening. Given the short time of rehearsal, the inexperience of the singers and musicians, and the complexity of the opera, it was a well-done performance. The most amazing thing about this experience is that it's made me into an opera-liker. The small and big faux-pas of the evening taught me to look beyond the artificiality and pretentiousness and enjoy the good music, costumes and set. Contrary to the opinions of some of the audience, an inexperienced opera goer could emerge after this performance with a greater not lesser appreciation of opera.

## Roses In Bloom

Debera Edwards and the George Washington University Grounds Department have invited Foggy Bottom residents to visit the campus rose gardens this summer. Ms. Edwards, who is the first rose gardener the university has had in 25 years, says the gardens are now in full bloom and will continue to bloom through the fall.

The roses were first planted on the campus in 1937 when the late GW President Cloyd H. Marvin

invited the Potomac Rose Society to use the university grounds "to show what can be done with roses in a city neighborhood and to demonstrate the best method of producing them." Over 208 bushes, representing 33 varieties, were donated and planted in beds designed by a Dr. B.Y. Morrison of the National Arboretum.

Originally located behind the Hall of Government and adjacent to Alumni House, the rose beds were moved in 1946 to temporary sites due to construction. They continued under the supervision of Mrs. Lillian Smith, head of the Grounds Department and rose

gardener at that time. In the next few years, the Potomac Rose Society and GW phased out the affiliation but the roses were cared for by Mrs. Smith until her retirement in 1954. Since then, there has been no official rose gardener until Ms. Edwards was appointed.

The rose gardens are located primarily between G and H and 20th and 21st streets and beside Lisner Auditorium. Along with her invitation, Ms. Edwards asks local residents not to pick the roses. "The stems are fibrous and tough, and a jagged tear leaves the stem and the plant open to disease."



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## Hotel Conversion Fight Continues

by Jon Nowick

The fight against one of the greatest threats to housing in Foggy Bottom and the city — conversions of apartments into hotels — appears to be gaining new ground.

As of the time this article went to press in early June, the D.C. City Council has taken the first steps toward restricting conversions of housing units into transient use.

The City Council action comes in the form of a bill sponsored by Councilmen John Wilson (Ward 2) and David Clarke (Ward 1). The bill was passed by the Council as a 90-day emergency order on May 20. It went into effect in early June.

The bill has since been tendered by Councilmen Wilson and Clarke as permanent legislation and passed a preliminary vote of the Council on June 3. A second Council vote and the approval of the Mayor and Congress are needed for it to become law.

The prohibition on conversions of housing units to transient use in the bill applies to all residential buildings except those in which more than 60 percent of the units were legally used for transient purposes as of May 20.

The City Council legislation comes only several weeks after the D.C. Zoning Commission relaxed many of the restrictions on conversions of apartments into hotels in its final decision on the hotel zoning case (79-1) on May 8.

The zoning decision nominally banned new hotels in residential zones, which make up most of central Foggy Bottom. However, it defined hotels so narrowly — they must rent rooms on a "daily basis" — that in practice apartments still could be converted into transient use.

The decision also liberalized hotel conversion rules for "special

purpose" zones, which include such apartment buildings as Columbia Plaza, Sherry Towers, and Potomac Park. And it allowed conversions to hotels as a matter-of-right in "mixed-use commercial" zones, which include 2400, 2424 and 2430 Pennsylvania Avenue.

The zoning case was hotly contested by Foggy Bottom residents, who urged that hotel development be encouraged downtown and not in residential neighborhoods. More than 900 signed a petition to Mayor Barry and the Zoning Commission. Many others made phone calls, wrote letters, attended hearings, and served as witnesses for the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC).

To find out the latest information on the hotel conversion bill — and such other issues before the Council as rent control and condominium conversion legislation — be sure to attend meetings of the ANC, held the first Tuesday evening of each month.

The next ANC meeting will be held Tuesday, July 1, at 8:00 p.m., at St. Mary's Court, 725-24th Street.

Also, if you live in an apartment building with a tenants association, your association can help its members stay on top of these issues. If your apartment does not already have a tenants association, contact an ANC commissioner for advice on how to form one. There are already 15 associations in Foggy Bottom, and they are growing every year in number, influence, and importance.

The writer is the current chairman of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC).

**ANC Meetings  
8 P.M.**

**July 1,  
St. Mary's Court  
725 24th St. N.W.**

**August 5  
Red Cross Building  
19th Between D & E. N.W.**

**September 9  
St. Mary's Court**

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## Thank you, Casillas

by Kathy Haley

One Wednesday last April, I stopped by Casillas Press to deliver that month's copy for the *Foggy Bottom News* to be typeset. Barbara, who oversees production of the *News* each month, sat writing at her desk, a phone receiver at her ear and another customer by her side.

Something looked different about her. She held her left hand vertically, the arm bent at the elbow and resting on her desk. Her hand and arm were covered with white powder and streaked with red.

"I cut the top of my thumb off," she answered my astonished expression. Speaking about it brought tears to her eyes, but only momentarily. She smiled as she said someone was driving her to a hospital soon. "We'll have your

copy ready by Monday," she said.

Walking back to work, I thought of how calm Barbara is. Two months earlier, she'd handled another emergency, one that could have delayed publishing the *News* for more than a week, with similar calm.

Barbara works hard each month to have the *Foggy Bottom News* ready for the presses on time. She and the other people at Casillas Press deserve the sincere thanks of the Foggy Bottom Association for the fine job they do on our newspaper.

Casillas Press, which does typesetting, layout and printing in English and Spanish and three other languages, is located in the basement of 1717 K Street, N.W., (223-1220.)

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## "Candidates"

(Continued from Page 1)

Members and their staff can either provide courageous and effective leadership or they can opt to ignore Foggy Bottom as an integral community within our City.

By, and large, each and everyone of us should constantly assess our own surroundings. In that regard, your Association exists for you and your surroundings. But, should you choose to remain silent (by failing to vote) or to be absent (by not making your views be known), then...

So that full representation can be achieved, invitations to attend our meeting have been sent to every Party Organization recognized by the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics. Additionally, our offer to appear before the FBA has been sent to each incumbent City Council member having an interest in our area. It is anticipated that every candidate present will speak briefly and will respond to questions.

There is so little in terms of your time — yet so much at stake!!!

Next Edition: September

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